

## Graduate School Primer Series: Organizing Your Space for Optimal Academic Performance

[AUDIO LOGO] HEIDI MARSHALL: All right, we can get started. So officially, hi, everyone. Welcome or welcome back. I see a few familiar names and faces from the session earlier today. So my name is Heidi Marshall. I am actually the outgoing Program Coordinator and Admin Assistant for the Office on Inclusion and Student Engagement. And I'm here, joined by my colleague Zenobia Lee-Nelson, who is the incoming Program Coordinator and Admin Assistant for the Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement. A few housekeeping items before we get into the session. As a reminder, this session is being recorded. It will be made available on the Orientation Hub on the Canvas web page within one to two weeks after this session has ended, so we have time to do some small edits and clean up the transcription so it can be easily accessible for everyone. The Closed Captioning is, also, on. So if you go to the bottom bar of your screen, you can see the option Access Your Captions. Or if your screen is not enlarged, there's more options if you can put the Caption process there, as well, too. We do have a-- we're about, I think, halfway into our Primary Series Sessions, so we do have an upcoming session on August 8 at 2:00 PM Eastern time, Maximizing Your Every Minute. And then the August 9 is the Basics of Mental Health and Well-being. So I encourage you to join us for our future sessions. And we look forward to having everyone on campus shortly. To today's session on Organizing Your Space to Optimize Your Academic Performance, we have Jen Forbes, who is the Director of the Big Red Barn, and who I am going to hand it over to you now to get us started. JEN FORBES: Great. Thanks, Heidi. And everyone can hear OK? Just want to double check that, that that's working. OK, so I put together this presentation several years ago for students to think about organizing their space with the focus being that with a great organized space, you can optimize a lot of things in your life. One of them being your academic performance. And this is just something that I have interest in, I'm passionate about, and I, personally, cannot work in an office that isn't well organized. So this is something that is important to me and that I spend time thinking about and doing. And so I'm assuming that probably, you're here today because it's something of interest to you, as well. But feel free as we're talking to put questions in the Chat. And Heidi is going to-- I'm going to pause a couple of times, but Heidi's, also, going to let me know if there's a question so we can slow down and take that question. So first, what I'd like you all to think about-- if I can get this to click-- what's happening right now in your space? So maybe you rent a room. Maybe you own a house. Maybe you're in an apartment. I just want you to think for a minute about the following questions. And I'm going to have you-- a couple of people want to type in the chat, feel free. Could you have two friends over right now without cleaning your space? So where do you fall here? They could eat off the floor. Maybe in a few hours. It's kind of a mess, but I could, maybe, tidy up quickly. Or how about, what if we meet at the Big Red Barn, instead? So if a couple of people want to put answers in the Chat, where are you at right now in your space? It'd be helpful for me to see some of those. If I could eat off the floor, I'd like to meet you. And we could be new best friends because that's a really clean, organized space. OK, a couple answers in the Chat. All right, so the second question, without looking, do you know where to find any

work or books that you would need today to bring the campus? Keys, ID, cell phone, bag, wallet, purse, could you find all those things in your space? OK, the choices are sure, I can get them right now. All except books and work. They're around here somewhere. I could find them. And then the last one is yes, just give me 20 minutes or an hour, maybe two hours. They're somewhere. So thoughts on that one, finding your work books, campus ID, cell phone, all that stuff. All the important things you need to jump out the door, I'm guessing. Last one. What's on your desk right now? First choice, Lysol wipes. I just cleaned it. Second choice, a mixed pile of notes. I got a bill, a birthday card, a picture, maybe a to-do list. And then the last one is so much, I can't see the desk. I'm not even sure what's on there. Where are we at with this one? Maybe, you could eat off the desk, maybe that's your answer. OK, so what I want to do today is talk a little bit about clutter. We're going to talk about some research. We're going to talk about some potential solutions. And I have some questions from what people wrote in when they registered for the session. We can go over a couple of those, as well. So I want to start off by talking about clutter. Clutter is a delayed decision, if you think about it. Things that are in a pile that you need to take care of or you have to decide what you're throwing away, or what you're not, or you're going to do something with it later. Too much of anything that makes the room appear busier than it needs to be. So if you look at this photo, if that gives you a little bit of stress, that could be an example of clutter for you. Like, little too busy for you. A lot going on. The third point, items not used to their potential or perceived potential. And not always garbage. We're not talking about just, like, trash here and there. We're just talking about extra amounts of stuff. The more clutter-- this is actually proven-- the more clutter people have, the less life satisfaction people have. Unlike what we hear over and over in the US culture, that more stuff makes us happier or makes us have more joy, it's not actually true. It actually impacts our life satisfaction. And we look like this woman sitting on the floor. Like, there's too much. Although, she doesn't really have a lot there. I would say the one on the left is a little bit more likely to cause some stress. But it's actually not true that we're going to be more satisfied if we own more things. So a couple study pieces of info. Princeton Neuroscience talked about multiple stimuli in a visual field, so a lot of things in your space that compete for representation in your brain. So basically, there's a whole lot of stuff that you can see and you're going to be more easily distracted because of all of that clutter that's around you. Your brain is literally being presented with more than one sandwich to bite into, and you're not sure which one to taste first. So I'm not a neuroscientist, maybe someone on this call is, but if you understand that first sentence, great. If not, basically it's saying, there's a whole lot that's going to distract you, and it's really difficult for your brain to process that. So we you look at some examples of these spaces, if you were to try to be productive in these spaces, would you tell me that this is a good, optimal environment for you to be productive? Would you want to go into these spaces to try to get some things done? This looks more kind of undergrad dorm room-ish in these pictures, but I know some of you probably live in Hasbrouck and you may just have one room within a house that's kind of yours and you have shared space outside of that. But if this is your space, that's really hard on your productivity. In contrast, if you were to enter one of these spaces, what is your feeling when you go into this space? This feels relaxed. It feels very organized, very put together. You could find the things that you're looking for, unless, of course, you raise the sheets on the bed and find everything is just jammed under there. But this is a lot more calming of an impact and a lot more settling when you approach it. Here's an example in a kitchen that I really

like because this is what I fall victim to. If my kitchen looks like what it does on the left, I'm probably not going to want to spend a lot of time in there. But if it's really clean and nice and organized, like the space on the right, I'm going to be more likely to want to be in that space. OK, so I have a little quiz for you. We're going to do a little interaction. I'm going to have you type in the Chat. What percentage of people do you think are born with an organized-- there's actually an organizing gene-- what percentage of people do you think are born with this organizing gene? That they like to organize space? Obviously, between zero and 100. And whoever gets closest to the actual percentage, I have a prize for you. So Heidi is going to watch the Chat. If you have a guess between zero and 100, what percentage of people are born with the organizing gene? If more than one person enter it, then we'll take the first one or the closest one when I call it off. What percentage do you think? All right, we got some good responses. I'll wait for a couple more. OK, last response. OK, I'm going to cut it off. So the correct answer is actually, 15%. I can confidently say this is me because I love, love, love organizing. And the organizing gene, I'm sure, is strong in me. So I'll be interested to see who got closest there. So thank you, Heidi, for tabulating those. So now we want to talk a little bit about why. Why is this clutter so rampant? And why is this such an issue for us? And why aren't we taking care of it? So there's, obviously, a lot of reasons. People are short on time. They think that they might need those items or want those items down the road. Or they're important or worth a lot of money. This is one that I see happen quite a lot. Well, I spent a lot of money on that, so I don't want to get rid of that, even if it's not serving you now. The space is small. So I had a couple of comments in the registration about people having not a ton of space. So we're going to talk a little bit about that or maybe they don't see a problem with the clutter but we've already seen that obviously this does have impact on us and maybe it's someone else's stuff. So that's another reason we got to think about the stuff that we have, the clutter in our life. This is, also, another good point, time wasted looking for something. Nationally, a million hours a day are wasted with people looking for something. So when I asked before about like, keys, ID, if this is your drawer and you have to rummage through this every day to find the things that you need to leave-- if your Chapstick's in here, and you really need it, and you spend five minutes on that, oh. Like, I want to optimize the amount of time I have in a day. I don't want to waste a bunch of it looking for things that are missing. I'm sure that you all feel the same way. Not only could you spend that time doing academic work, you could spend it doing a lot of other things that are more important to you. OK, so we're going to talk a little bit about a Psychology Today article, and I can send out the references for these. But this is one of the things that they talked about in an article, why mess can lead to stress. That clutter bombards our minds-- we already talked about that. Causing our senses to work over time. It distracts us by prying our attention away from what we're focused on. It makes it really difficult to relax. Did anybody look at that stress picture and say, oh, my gosh, if I was in that room, I would have to pick up? Like, I can't think of anything else, except what clutter is on that floor. It signals to our brain that our work is never done. This is a big one for me. Like, I'm looking at that mess thinking, there's another task I have. There's another task I have. When I pick that up, I've got to do the laundry from that pile. Yikes, that's a lot. It makes us anxious because we're not sure what it's going to take to get through to the bottom of the pile. It's going to be an unlimited amount of time. It creates guilt. Like, I should be more organized. Or I'm embarrassed because someone's going to stop by my space, and this is embarrassing to have my space look like this. Inhibiting our creativity and

productivity, we talked about that before, also. But in less cluttered spaces, people have a better ability to think, brainstorm, problem solve, get creative. That's more likely in an uncluttered space. So definitely worth our time to think about this. And it creates frustration by preventing us from locating the thing we need quickly. Again, you're getting ready to leave, and you're in that drawer trying to find your ID. That's so frustrating because you're going to be late or you're going to miss the bus or whatever is going to happen as a result. So what is this actually costing us? This is actually quite a high cost. So this here's an example in this kitchen. This is my biggest downfall is re-buying something I already had that I couldn't find, or it was like shoved in the back of a closet. And my number one is dining out. If this is my kitchen, I am absolutely going to get takeout or order a pizza. I am not going to clean this kitchen for an hour and a half before I start making dinner. So that's a huge one, you're spending money on things that you may already have or have the ability to source yourself. When things break because they have to be-- because they're in the bottom of this pile and you didn't know or they fall off a crowded counter, that could be a big one. Sleep, actually. This is impacting our sleep. That clutter restricts our brain from settling down. If you've ever looked at a huge pile of papers or looked at a really messy desk and then tried to focus on something like sleeping or calming your brain down, it's really hard to do. Proficiency. Again, we talked about focusing. Time, obviously. This cutting into academic time, leisure time. A ton of time is spent with these things. Your physical health. If our environments aren't clean-- if you're anything like me, have any allergies or asthma-- you can literally be sick from these environments that are creating extra dust, extra dirt, potentially even, like, critters. There could be huge problems there. And stress from lost items. So what are the benefits? Obviously, if we're more organized, here are some great benefits. Less stress. More energy. You have that time back. You have that money back. You have the focus back. You are in charge of your stuff, not your stuff feeling in charge of you. And a lot more here, obviously. Space to relax, eat, work. Wouldn't it be nice to come home to like a clean space and feel like you can just, enjoy it and take a deep breath after a long day of working or in class or grading papers? Feeling like you have more space. Knowing where things are. These are all great benefits. All things that we want and that we want to have our space organized for. So I want you to think a little bit today about why you came to this session. What's kind of the vision? What are the things you're thinking about? Are you thinking about a study or workspace? Are you thinking about a relaxation space? Or where you sleep? Or maybe you want to do like, look, this awesome movie room. These are my goals someday is to have a house where I could have a little movie theater in my house. That would be fun. Where are you putting your desk? What's your vision for what you want to be thinking about today and how you want that space to kind of function? Or are you trying to find a place to put the desk and you don't think you've got a space right now? So that's part of what I want you to think about. And then we're going to talk about a process that you can use to actually make this work for you. And it's abbreviated with SPACE. So first, you're going to sort like things with like things. Give me a Thumbs Up if you have office or work stuff in several rooms of your home and in an office and/or in your car and/or at school and/or in your backpack. Like, your stuff is spread out in six places, seven places. Give me a Thumbs Up if that's the case for you. I know that's the case for me because I'm not the best at getting things to hang out with their friends. But it's happening with some of you, I see. Yeah, Amanda is saying that's happening. So when you're getting started on this process, what we want to talk about is getting your like things sorted with your like things. So to start this, you're

going to want to get all of those things from all these different places and get them in one spot. If I were to go in my kitchen right now and get all my kitchen utensils out, I'd realize, I have, like, four pairs of scissors. I probably have three whisks. I probably have four, like, flippers, like pancake flippers. I don't need all of those, but they're in a couple of different places. So you don't even realize that you've got too many. So get all of your stuff sorted like things with like things. And then we're going to talk about purging what you don't need. Throwing away what's broken. Getting rid of the things you're not going to touch or use. Maybe you have four spatulas and you only need one because you're in a small apartment. Or you're moving to a smaller space, do you need three end tables? Maybe you can consolidate a bit and have a little-- and purge to have a little bit less. So this is getting all this started for the first time. Then we want to assign a home for everything. If you go to put all that office stuff away and there's nowhere to put it, you're going to constantly have a pile of office stuff that's not sorted. That's not organized anywhere. That's going to just continue to drive you crazy. So we need a home for it or else, how can you put it back where it goes? And so thinking about small spaces, do you actually have a space for everything you need? And we're going to talk about zones in a minute. Then next is containerizing. Bins, baskets, some way of keeping things in that space organized. You'll see here, this is notebooks. There's a little shelf. The scissors have a home, the ruler has a home, the stapler has a home in this picture. So something like that could work for you. It really depends on what makes the most sense for you. And then once everything is in that spot, you want to target to equalize or spend three to five minutes a day getting those things back in those places. So part of the strategy is having a spot for everything and then getting it in that spot. And one of the strategies I use to do this is to set a timer. If there's a ton of dishes and they need to be put away, and I don't want to do it, I will set a timer for five minutes, 10 minutes-- whatever-- and say OK, I can put away dishes for five minutes. When the timer goes off, if I'm sick of putting away dishes, I'm allowed to stop. But inevitably, what happens is the timer hits and I have, like, four dishes left, and I'm not going to leave four dishes. I'm already up, I'm already doing it, I'm already in the groove, and I just end up keep-- I keep going until it's done. If I really hated it and didn't want to do it or there were too many, I could stop at five minutes. I let myself do that and. Then maybe I go back and do something else and do another five minutes in an hour when I need a break from some kind of other work. But the idea is that equalizing puts everything back to where it was and then you're not overburdened with having to clean everything every day. This doesn't take into account a deep clean, that's a little bit of a different story, but this is for an everyday sorting situation. And then I'm going to talk about one more thing, and then we'll take some questions. The next thing I want to talk about is zones. So I talked about, do you have space for all the things you need? So some grad students have children. Do you have kids and you need a space for them to do their playing or their homework or a place to change diapers? Do you need a place because you really like to game? Do you want to have a spot where you go and do your gaming? Do you have a spot to work out? Do you have a place to put dirty laundry? Do you have a process for that or does it just sit on the floor? Is there a place you want to be to read or write or grade? I know if I'm reading and I'm in bed, I'm going to fall asleep. If I'm reading and I'm at a desk, I'll stay awake. So maybe reading on the couch is not the best idea for me, and reading in bed is for sure not a great idea, unless I'm trying to use it to fall asleep. Where are you going to put academic notes, books, things like that? And these are just a couple of examples of if an undergrad had all of their classes and

each has a drawer and everything they need on Tuesdays is in one drawer. They scoop that up, and they go to class. Maybe you are TAing a class, and you need something similar to sort items that you have. Maybe there are certain things you bring to campus every Monday, only every Tuesday. The point is to have a zone that works for you for the things that you need and the things you're going to use most often. If this is my drawer for moisturizer and face wipes and all these things, maybe those are the things I touch every single day. And they're all in a zone. And I know I can go over to that drawer and get done everything I need to get done for that day. As opposed to one cream is here and somethings in the other room and I can't-- my mascara is in my purse. That's not going to help me to do this quickly. You want to have the ability to get everything in one go. OK, so I want to see if there's any questions now, and then we're going to talk about some resources. If you have anything, you can pop in the Chat. I'll just give that a couple of seconds, and then we'll move on. OK, I'm going to scoop forward. But if you have anything, feel free to add it. And Heidi is going to interrupt me if there's anything in there. But someone has a little bit of a longer thing, you can do that. OK, so resources, I'd like to talk about kind of what's next? And what are the things that you can be thinking about? Or what are some of the things that could be helpful for you? So one thing I want to review quickly is about organizing. A few things to keep in mind. First of all, the statistic is that we wear 20% of our clothes 80% of the time. So a recommendation for closets would be to keep like items with like items. So keep your shirts with your shirts, your pants with your pants, blah, blah, blah. You can arrange light to dark or rainbow. But the point is however you arrange it, you want to be able to grab the thing that you want. If you're looking for your pink shirt, you want to be able to find that quickly to save you time or maybe even set it out ahead to get dressed. I know there's a lot of excitement around rainbow in the closet. And it is visually nice to look at. It takes a little longer to put your clothes away, but that's probably worth it in the morning when you're getting dressed and you feel like you're running late. In my opinion, it is at least. Another great organization resource is containers and getting clear ones to make sure that you don't have to open it every time you're curious what's inside or using labels to make sure that things are well-labeled so that you're not having to open containers every time you need to grab something. And a home for dirty laundry-- I know I already mentioned that in the last slide. But I think that's one of the number ones that makes us feel really cluttered really easily is when there isn't a home for dirty laundry to go before you're ready to wash it. OK. So one of the things I propose here is that to get going on all of this, maybe you're new to Cornell or Ithaca, and you're just starting out in a space so you can start some really good habits, or maybe you've been here, and you'd like to get more organized. Spend some time considering how your space and organization could bring some real benefits to you academic and otherwise. And then figure out a process that you want to go through. This is an example of Pinterest, which has a ton of ideas. This is a 30-day declutter challenge with a different thing that you can do every day so that it is not an overwhelming task. But at the end of a month, you would have a decluttered house, so organizing laundry space, organizing a bookshelf. Maybe you don't have one of these things. Maybe you don't have a big box of electronic cords like I do. So maybe you can cross that off automatically, or maybe you don't have cardboard boxes, so you get a free day that day. But you can find tons of these, and you could even fill in squares for yourself of the things you need to work on. But I wouldn't recommend being like, I'm going to do my kitchen, and it's huge, and you've got drawers, cabinets, the fridge, and the freezer, and where you keep your food, and

where you keep your dishes, and where you keep your Tupperware. Like, that could be a lot. So I'd recommend breaking those things up into smaller bites so you can do one a night, and you can feel really successful about that. And then that schedule over time will provide you a little bit of the bug, the decluttering bug. I got so excited I did the junk drawer that there's another drawer I want to do later. So that's the recommendation. And like I said, you can find tons of these decluttering challenges, one-month declutter online everywhere. This is someone I follow on Instagram who has a closet for her hijabs. And on the left-hand side is the closet before she organized it. And she was having a hard time even telling what she had in there. She can't see half of the stuff. So she took everything out, bought a new set of hangers, and redid the entire thing again in rainbow order, solids on the top, prints on the bottom so that she could actually see what she had. And it was much more organized for her. So this works very differently for everyone, and I want you to do something that really works for you. Also, if you're looking at this and saying to yourself, wow, she had to buy 300 new hangers to make this closet work, that might be true. And that might have worked for her. Maybe that doesn't work for you. So also there's some good recommendations on organization ideas that you can do at dollar stores or very inexpensively. So that's another thing you can look up on Pinterest or online. I thought this was a really funny tweet that someone put out. I wanted to start living a decluttered, minimalist lifestyle, so I'm at Target buying \$300 worth of baskets and bins. I mean, that's helpful if you actually have that kind of money and if you actually have a plan for them. Don't just get the bins and leave them in your living room. Now you've got an additional problem that you have another task that's not getting done. It's going to impact your ability to focus. So don't go crazy. With the spending, you can spend minimal amounts of money and still get some very good benefits here. A couple other quick organization hacks. I really love this one on the top. They're just like hooks that you can buy very cheaply at hardware stores to hold things like bags or cleaning supplies. So maybe you don't need your whole closet for clothing. And maybe this is a great way for you to organize things like an umbrella. On the right, this is a shoe holder that you could use for snacks or a lot of different small items that you use in the kitchen to get all the bags out of the pantry or out of the closet if that's what you have. This would be another great thing if you have roommates to assign certain cubbies to certain roommates and then keep your snack items separate from roommates' snack items if that's something that you want to do or keep certain things with allergens away from other things with allergens. So that's another option. And like I alluded to before, cords, wires, gadgets-- all of this technology stuff can really overwhelm us quickly as well. So I also like really cheap, inexpensive solutions for cords and keeping those things organized. This one is kind of silly. It's not that I'm recommending that you buy these cord keepers. But if you just took a cheap puzzle-- excuse me-- sorry-- if you just took a cheap puzzle and use the pieces, that's a great place to wrap up cords and keep them in drawers a little bit more organized so they're not all getting tangled. Because, again, if you're spending 15 minutes untangling your earbuds-- if they're on a cord, that is-- that's more time you could be spending doing something else. OK. And some more resources-- like, you probably just saw me jump ahead a little bit. But there's tons of really great books, and shows, and options out there for people to pay attention to. The Home Edit's getting a lot of attention right now. This is two women who go into people's houses and do organizational work. They like rainbows, as you can see. So they're even doing their snacks and their refrigerators in rainbow order. That might not be your style. You might be like, there's no way, or I don't eat celery, so it'll

never be a rainbow. Again, the point is you do you, that you find something that works well for you. And maybe this to you looks like, wow, that's lovely, and I really want to do that. And maybe that's stressful for you, but they have a couple of good books, and they've got a show on Netflix that you could tune into, which just gives some really great ideas on some things that you could do. So the winner of our contest today-- I'm sure Heidi is going to get a name for me. But the winner actually got you their book. And this one is about what you want and organizing it. I'm sorry. Owning what you want and organizing everything. So this has a lot of different sections with a lot of good info. So this is going to go to whoever got closest to 15% when we did our little quiz. And the next one, I'm sure a lot of people have heard of "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up." And Marie Kondo, she's huge everywhere right now. But basically, her strategies and a lot of other ones is using more joy and Feng Shui and a lot of other-- I don't know what the word is I'm looking for, just basically ways to tidy up. And her whole, I guess, push is that your items should spark joy. The things that you choose to have around you should spark joy or should have a specific purpose that you need to keep them for. So she's got books. She's got workbooks you can go through. She has tons of really great resources. And there's another one about clearing clutter with Feng Shui. That's another great option. I don't know also if people have heard of Swedish death cleaning. This is another book that came out and actually just turned into a show on Peacock, where the tenets are about decluttering, and parting with things, and deciding what's really important to you. And part of the long-term goal is that you're not burdening others with decisions about your items when you eventually pass. So it's a little of a different strategy, and some people don't love that piece about it. But the show is actually really interesting. And they have a really interesting, I guess, philosophy around this and making sure that we're not leaving lifetimes of clutter to someone else to make decisions around. So I've seen this show, really cool show, and the book. I recommend either if that sounds like something you're interested in. Another really great book. KC Davis is a therapist, author, and speaker. And she wrote this book about how to keep house while drowning. She also has an Instagram handle called strugglecare. And she talks about approaches for self-care when people are dealing with health issues, or a mental illness, or hard things in their life. And someone asked in the question specifically about folks in this work around ADHD. And she talks about that in her book and gives a lot more connection to mental health and doing really difficult tasks in the first place. She has some interesting concepts, so she's another one that I would recommend checking out. And her Instagram is fascinating. And then the other strategy is just to have less to begin with, not to have the clutter to begin with. So these are all books and resources around minimizing how much we have to begin with. This one by Dave Bruno, "How I Got Rid of Almost Everything, Remade My Life, and Regained My Soul," fascinating. These two on the left wrote a book about minimalism. And they've done actually a tour, and they also have a TV show. Basically, the point is having less to begin with means that we're not going to run into this clutter and that you're only keeping things in your life that you actually want in your life and finding that joy in them. So this is another interesting set of books. We talked about clearing out and decluttering. And so I just wanted to put a plug in for sustainability here, if you are doing that work, that there are places in town that you can either donate or resell items that you have that you don't need. These are also great places to help find lower-cost items if you're looking to restructure your space. And let's say you've got two huge couches and two huge chairs in your living room, but you need an office. And you want to



get rid of a couch, and add a desk, and move things around. I did this in my house during COVID. I needed a desk, so I got rid of chairs to accommodate that because I was working from home. And then when that season was done and I didn't need it anymore, I switched things back around. So these are great places for both purchasing and donating and thinking about this from a sustainability mindset that we don't have to go spend a ton of money and change every single thing with the only answer being funding. Like, you can find some really great things with these resources. And above and beyond Ithaca, there are more as well in just the area. And there are Facebook groups in Cornell and Ithaca area where people are selling items that may work for your space for you to keep some of this clutter at bay. OK. Another question that came through when people registered-- is there preferred spaces for students to work and study, private study rooms, things like that? So I'd recommend the following. If you find a spot in your academic area that's great for you to study, if you're the kind of person who knows you can't study in your bedroom, and you're not going to be able to focus, then try to find a place on campus that is your spot that you like to study. When the Big Red Barn is open again during the semester, starting the 21st of August, we have write-in. So Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 11:00 is considered quiet time in the barn for students to just come and get work done. So that may be something that you'd like pack up, come to the barn, and go in and say I'm going to get three hours of work done, and here's where I'm going to do it. There's a lot of resources at the libraries I'm going to talk about on the next slide. And then I'd also just recommend, again, you know yourself best. You know. Are you going to get work done if you stay at home? Are you going to get less done? Are you going to be distracted to go clean that thing, start the laundry, or do the dishes, or are you going to say, I really need to go to campus? To get work done, I have to be on campus. I cannot do this in my living room. So it's really about being self-reflective for you and trying some things to see what works. This is the library resource I wanted to just talk about quickly. There are study spaces, meeting rooms, things like that. And there's info on their website here about that. Grad students actually have the ability to borrow space for the semester. If you look under the study spaces in that right-hand picture, individual and group study rooms can be reserved four hours at a time. Collaborative workstations can be reserved, and graduate study rooms are available to grad students. So you guys have options within the library for graduate student spaces and the study areas. You see three pictures over from that on the third floor of Mann Library, where you can have a study cubicle docking station up to eight hours at a time. So if you really need to go in, time yourself, and say I'm going to go like I'm going to work and get this work done, that's a resource that they offer. So feel free to use that if you're not finding a lot of other places where you can actually get good work done. OK. And one other question I just want to address which isn't on this slide-- but someone asked about working from home versus working at an office and about productivity. And I don't specifically know of any research. There's probably some out there, and I'd encourage you to look to see if you can find any. But I do still think this is a very individual decision. Does anybody have a friend who they're blaring really loud, aggressive music and getting really intense work done at the same time? And you're like, how do you think? How do you do that? That might work for some people. And if it doesn't work for you, then you shouldn't do it. If it works for you, a completely quiet space with no one around, then you should do that. If you need a little bit of sound and you know it's best when you listen to classical music, or have your headphones on, or whatever, you should do what makes the most sense for you. You should pick and choose from this

presentation what are the things that you can put together that will be most beneficial for your style, your program, all of the things that you're doing. I don't know if one of those is better than the other. I've had friends that worked from home during COVID who loved it and would never go back to the office. And I knew people that were chomping at the bit to get out of their house to go back to the office. So there's been a complete spectrum of that. Even some people who said they'd never like it are now working from home full time and have found a way to make it work. So it really depends on you. If you know at home you're not going to do the work, don't stay home. Like, do the thing you need to do to make it most productive for you and test out a couple of strategies when you're not in the middle of your largest academic project being due. Questions and thoughts I want to do now. I'm going to end this slideshow so we can do that. Any thoughts or questions people would like to share? I'd love to have a discussion if anybody else has any thoughts. Thanks for the comments in the chat, folks, because I couldn't really peek at this. [CHUCKLES] Any thoughts or questions? OK. I'll ask this. Does anybody have a suggestion that you heard today that you'd like to try or something that you think you could actually try in your space that you'd like to give a try to? Reserving a section just for play. OK. Great. That's great, Paige. Do you have a place already that might work for that? You can either unmute or put it in the chat, either one. But do you think you have a spot that you might be able to use for that for yoga, video games, or whatever works for you? I think so. I'm trying to figure out how to separate the desk and play in my living room. Yeah. There's a lot of creative options with very small spaces. Sometimes you have an open space that needs to function as both. And you need to kind of almost flip the room for it to do that. It's kind of like the Big Red Barn. We have space for studying that turns into lunch space that turns into swing dance and trivia. We have to use it for a lot of things. We don't have enough space to do all of this separately. So finding ways to switch that in and out is super helpful. And then let's see. Riley said containerizing an office space. That's great. Yeah. Having any way you can put different projects you're working on or different things in different spaces, imagine going to the office, opening a drawer or opening a container, and having everything you need for a project. And you can just sit down and get going. That'd be great because then you can leave earlier, right? That would be lovely. OK. Jamie said the space. I'm moving from PNW. I don't know what that is. What is that? I'm trying to organize everything for packing. Oh, that's great. You have to tell me what PNW is, though. It's probably a really easy abbreviation that I don't. Pacific Northwest. Great. Yes. So you're trying to out what you need here. Is that true, Jamie? You can unmute if you want to. So Paige has said, I don't want to look at my computer-- I'm not studying anymore thanks to this presentation. You're welcome. So a couple of things you could do there-- closing everything up, maybe having a drawer you put everything in, maybe having something you use to cover the space, kind of like if you left the office you'd shut the door. So what could you do to shut the door on that space and make and be able to use it in a versatile way? Like, maybe it becomes the kitchen table. But when you're done working, there's something you do to close that out to signal to your body that you're done with work for that moment, and you're not going to sit there and stare at your computer the rest of the night. I think that's really helpful, and it helps make smaller spaces useful for many things. So great. I'd love to hear how that goes. Let's see. Tory said money-saving tips helped me toward the end of Target's back to school sale. There's a lot of items on clearance that could be useful for organizing spaces. Also, if you have the Target debit card, you can get additional 5%. Yes. I saw that. You can upload your

student ID, say that you're a student, and they have a one-time shopping trip discount that you could use. I'd also recommend if you're running out of space to bring things. We have Target, and our Target has the same things that all your Targets have. So come and take a peek at your space, figure out I need a bend right here, and measure the space for that, and then go get what you need, rather than bring a bunch of stuff, and then it doesn't really fit in the space. Like, you'll know when you set up zones where you need to actually put stuff. So that's a really helpful piece. And again, you don't have to spend a ton of money. You can do this on the cheap in a lot of ways or on the cheap until you have more funds to do. And someone else wrote The Container Store does this as well. That's great to know. So a lot of good choices. Also, Heidi, do you mind really quick-- can you look up the dump and run sale real quick so we could put that in the chat? I meant to look it up before we started, but I don't know how many-- can you guys do a thumbs up if you're a brand new grad student? Then I can just tell how many people we have, but I'll start to describe-- there is a sale called dump and run at the end of the year. Last year in May, they collected donated items that students no longer wanted. And they take them to a warehouse, and they set up a huge sale. Heidi just did the link, and you can go to that sale and purchase items. They're all used items from students donating. Well, they're not all used. Some actually might still have tags on them, but you can go purchase items. They have flat rates. So a shirt is the same cost. A bin is the same cost. Cups, plates, none of it is expensive at all, and all the money goes to charity. So it's basically like a huge pop-up thrift store. And they, needless to say, have the things that students would want and need the most because they're things that other students donated. So they have tons of hangers, tons of bins to put shower things in, tons of stand-up mirrors, I mean, all the things that you can think of that people would need in a temporary apartment they're not going to stay in. Really great options. So if you're looking for any of that stuff that you were going to go buy new, and you want to be a little bit more sustainable, and help support that charity, that is the 14th through 17th. Thank you, Heidi, for looking that up. They're having that sale at The Shops at Ithaca Mall, which is also in the same building as Target. So you could even go to that, get what you need, and then if you don't find an item you need that was on your list, you're right by Target to go grab it at Target or wherever you want to shop. So that's another really great option for getting containers and things like that to help you stay organized. And you might want to think about that in an office, too. How can we give them stuff? I think the donation instructions are also on that website. At a certain point, they'll stop taking donations. But if you're already in Ithaca and want to donate, it's at the mall now. And I believe you can drop stuff off there if you're looking to get rid of some things. But again, there's also a lot of Facebook groups about free options to trade with people. So if there's something that you could use that will help you stay more organized, great place to go for that. OK. I'm curious if there's any other thoughts, anything else someone's going to try that they saw in the presentation that they thought was a pretty good idea. Anyone else have any reason that they came to, something they wanted to talk about maybe that we didn't address that I'm happy to-- I'm happy to take a question or get suggestions from the audience on. Anybody else have any thoughts like, I'm living in Hasbrouck, and what's tough for me is blah, whatever? We can help. Any suggestions for someone who is moving from place to place while staying organized? So when you're moving, you mean? You're trying to organize bringing everything here? Tell me a little more, Tory. Living with a roommate, but it's temporary. OK. Someone recommended they label and moving boxes with rooms they go in. Oh, that's very

kind. Paige, that's really sweet that you're willing to put those in a spreadsheet. So if you're doing a roommate situation, it's temporary. One thing you might think about is keeping some things packed that you know if you know you're not going to touch them. Let's say you're not moving again till the end of October. Then you might leave cold weather clothing packed up, and have that in a closet tucked away somewhere, and just keep the things out that you're going to use the most so that you have less to pack on the other end. If you're not sure how long it's going to be, then it's really hard to know what you'll need to take out and what you won't. But if you know you don't need to unpack your entire kitchen because the roommate is going to have tools as well, then you might want to think about having some of that stay packed and then just tucked to the side so it doesn't feel cluttery. If it's packed in boxes, I don't think it's going to feel clutter free to you. If you have it all unpacked and there's no space for it before you wait to the second location, that could actually feel a little bit worse. So I'm living in space bags in a very tiny room till November then fly to Ithaca for a lab class for a week. Yes. This is challenging. OK. Absolutely. So it's feeling cluttered to you, I'm assuming. Yeah. I would say anything you can do to keep that organized. So even within space bags, is there anything that you could do to put things in color order again in some way that would make it easier for you or, again, tucking away warmer weather clothing, or finding a way that maybe you can create a little-type closet situation to hang stuff up in might be helpful for you? But if it's really small, then I would say use it for what you need to for storage and then find other places to do your work outside of that, either the rest of the house or apartment, an office, the library. Like, where could you go to spread out a little bit and not feel so cramped with that stuff if there's not another option for another place that you can put things? I've done this, so it's tough. I know. I did that for a while where I lived with like-- I just had a minuscule amount of my things. And it's really difficult to have the space and feel organized. So whatever you can do to label and feel organized and feel good for yourself is what I'd recommend. And good luck with it. We'll see you in Ithaca. Come visit. [CHUCKLES] Yeah. Color coding-- and again, if you're not going to use it, I would find a way to tuck that away. Maybe do a space bag under the bed with out of season and then just keep the things you need right then or any kind of fun way you can figure out to do it. But a lot of these, like I said-- like, The Home Edit women specifically-- I mean, look at this book. They love a rainbow. They're really into it. So if that helps you find what you need quickly, then that's better than nothing. I can take one more quick question, and then Heidi is going to wrap us up for today. Anybody have any last-minute thing that they want to bring forward? Yeah. Happy to help. Anything else anybody wants to ask, or question, or a thought, or other suggestion that you've used that you really like? I'll give you one more for clothing if you're trying to organize a closet. The experts recommend that you turn the hangers on your clothing when you clean your closet out. And then when you wear an item, you turn the hanger the other way. And then you check in on your closet in a year to see which items have not had the hanger turn around, which means you haven't worn them. And then reevaluate do you need that item. If the season came and went that you would wear it in, if it's like a Halloween costume or something that's different, if it's a special event, if you were in your friend's wedding and you still have that red dress hanging in the closet, that might be a different story. But for everyday items, after you haven't touched it for a year, are you ever going to wear it? So that hanger trick is really helpful in that case. OK. If you have any additional questions, feel free to let me know. I'm going to turn it over to Heidi to wrap us up for today with the evaluation. And

thank you for coming. And I'll get the name of the student who won this book for you to pick it up at the Big Red Barn. I'll send you an email. HEIDI MARSHALL: Thanks, Jen. JENNIFER FORBES: Thank you, Heidi. HEIDI MARSHALL: I just put it in the chat evaluation link for you to pull up in the session today. It's a very short, quick evaluation form for us to get a better sense of how to make the primer series better and for future years. And I'm also going to-- if I can find it-- I just had it. If you need to sign up for any future sessions, I'm dropping in the link for the website. And we look forward to having you for future sessions and when you come to campus in a few weeks. Thanks, everyone.